

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PANAMA 07238 211736Z

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ACTION SCS-03

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 ISO-00 SCA-01 L-03 H-02 DHA-02 /018 W

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R 211628Z OCT 76

FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9474

INFO PANCANAL

USCINCSO

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: CASC, PN

SUBJECT: ARREST AND PROMPT RELEASE OF AMCIT REV. CHARLES PLOCK

1. AMERICAN CITIZEN REV. CHARLES PLOCK, A ROMAN CATHOLIC PRIEST WORKING IN PUERTO ARMUELLES, CHIRIQUI PROVINCE, WAS ARRESTED YESTERDAY, OCTOBER 20 BY GUARDIA NACIONAL OFFICIALS IN PUERTO ARMUELLES, TAKEN TO DAVID, THE PROVINCIAL CAPITAL AND THERE RELEASED EVENING OF SAME DAY.

2. EMBASSY DUTY OFFICER LEARNED OF ARREST THROUGH A TELEPHONE CALL FROM ANOTHER U.S. PRIEST IN CHIRIQUI. ACCORDING TO HIS INFORMATION, FR. PLOCK HAD BEEN CHARGED WITH "INTERFERING IN THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF PANAMA". EMBASSY OFFICER SPOKE TO ARCHBISHOP MCGRATH SHORTLY THEREAFTER AND MCGRATH STATED HE HAD UNDERSTOOD THE CHARGES TO BE "INCITING STUDENTS TO RIOT AND POSSESSION OF MARIHUANA". PLOCK DENIED ALL CHARGES.

3. WHATEVER FR. PLOCK WAS CHARGED WITH, IT APPEARS THAT HIS ARREST STEMED FROM COMMUNITY RIVALRIES IN PUERTO ARMUELLES.

4. ARCHBISHOP MCGRATH PHONED EMBASSY OFFICER AT 7:00 P.M. TO INFORM HIM THAT PLOCK HAD BEEN RELEASED AND IT APPEARED ALL CHARGES AGAINST HIM HAD BEEN

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PAGE 02 PANAMA 07238 211736Z

DROPPED. MCGRATH ADDED THAT PLOCK'S RELEASE WAS

A CONSEQUENCE OF A CONVERSATION BETWEEN CHIRIQUI
MILITARY ZONE COMMANDER, MAJOR HERRERA, AND
GENERAL TORRIJOS.

5. EMBASSY SEES NO ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN UNLESS THERE
ARE FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS IN AFFAIR.
JORDEN

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ARRESTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 21 OCT 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: blochd0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976PANAMA07238
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760396-0324
From: PANAMA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19761029/aaaaaygw.tel
Line Count: 68
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION SCS
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: blochd0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 26 JUL 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <26 JUL 2004 by CunninFX>; APPROVED <29 OCT 2004 by blochd0>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ARREST AND PROMPT RELEASE OF AMCIT REV. CHARLES PLOCK
TAGS: CASC, PN, US, (PLOCK, CHARLES)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006